

# THE MILITANT

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Conference in Cuba advances fight to free the Cuban Five  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Obama Asia trip shows no clear foreign policy course

BY DOUG NELSON

U.S. president Barack Obama's November 12–19 tour to Japan, Singapore, China, and South Korea highlighted Washington's growing challenges in East Asia and the White House's lack of a clear foreign policy course.

Little was accomplished on important policy issues from Washington's campaign against North Korea and Iran to sharpening trade tensions. In South Korea, Obama's final stop, he got the strongest backing for increasing pressure on North Korea regarding its nuclear program. There he vowed to "break from the pattern that has existed in the past" of back and forth negotiations without "progress on the core issues."

A week earlier the administration announced it would dispatch U.S. envoy Stephen Bosworth to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, December 8 to urge the North Korean government to return to negotiations on disarmament with the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, known as the six-party talks.

However, unlike under the previ-

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## U.S. gov't set to triple immigration 'audits'

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a sharp escalation of attacks on undocumented workers, U.S. officials announced November 19 that they had ordered immigration audits at 1,000 companies. This brings the number of audits this year to at least 1,650, more than triple the number in 2008.

During the audits Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents review company records to determine if employees are legally authorized to work in the United States.

The audits are part of the Barack Obama administration's strategy of downplaying high-profile immigration raids, which have often been met by public protests, and relying on other measures to intimidate immigrants and divide working people.

Since 2007 more than 600 miles of fencing has been built along the U.S.–Mexico border. With the addition of hundreds more cops earlier this year, there are now more than 20,000 border patrol agents stationed there.

In July ICE launched 652 audits, including one at American Apparel in Los Angeles. That led American Apparel to fire some 1,800 workers after ICE said

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## California: students, workers protest cuts

State gov't raises tuition by 32 percent



Militant/Betsey Stone

Students and striking campus workers demonstrate in Sproul Plaza at University of California Berkeley November 18 against tuition hikes and state government attacks on union.

BY BETSEY STONE

BERKELEY, California—Students at University of California campuses, outraged by a tuition increase of 32 percent, rallied, marched, and occupied campus buildings during three days of protest starting November 18.

Members of Local 9119 of the Uni-

versity Professional and Technical Employees-Communication Workers of America also walked off the job November 18–19, picketing entrances to the campus at UC Berkeley. Laboratory technicians, research aides, and computer workers who are mem-

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## Framed-up attorney ordered to prison for 'conspiracy'



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Lynne Stewart addresses crowd of 100 supporters November 19 at federal court in Manhattan as she prepared to turn herself in to marshals to begin serving a 28-month prison term. From left to right: city councilman Charles Barron; Stewart; Milana Velasquez, Stewart's granddaughter; attorney Liz Fink; and Ralph Poynter, Stewart's husband.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK—Civil liberties attorney Lynne Stewart turned herself in November 19 to begin serving a 28-month prison sentence.

Stewart was convicted in a 2005 trial for "conspiracy to provide material aid to terrorist activity." She had

remained free on bail until a federal appeals court ruled against her November 17. Codefendant and Arabic translator Mohammed Yousry was also imprisoned November 19.

The charges against Stewart came from her distribution of a press release

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## 5 Miami workers sentenced in gov't-inspired 'terrorism' plot

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

MIAMI—Five construction workers from Liberty City, an African-American section of this city, were sentenced to prison terms ranging from six to 13 years in mid-November. They were convicted in May on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to commit terrorism."

Patrick Abraham, 30, was given just over nine years; Stanley Phanor, 34, drew eight years; Burson Augustin, 24, was handed six years; and Rotschild Augustine, 26, got seven

years. Narseal Batiste, 35, who the government said was the leader of the "conspiracy," was slapped with 13-and-a-half years. After his sentence is complete Batiste will be on probation for 35 years.

Prosecutors had sought a sentence of up to 70 years for Batiste, and 30 to 50 years for the other four.

The case against the five and two other Black construction workers, who became known as the Liberty City Seven, was based on the work and testimony of two FBI informers who were paid more than \$130,000

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## Welcome to our readers

BY SAM MANUEL

Congratulations to all those who helped to make the fall 2009 campaign to expand the readership of the *Militant* a success. We welcome the 2,008 workers, students, and others who subscribed to this socialist news-weekly during the recent eight-week drive.

This week's issue features several articles on the fights of working people and youth against the conse-

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# Los Angeles truckers protest onerous rules

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—Truck drivers at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach tied up traffic for hours November 13 with a caravan to City Hall to protest new regulations that are devastating for truckers trying to make a living. Organizers say more than 1,500 trucks joined the caravan; the *Los Angeles Times* said it was “more than 400.”

“About 6,000 trucks and drivers will be out of work January 1 because of the Clean Truck Program,” said Glenn Amaya, a member of the National Port Drivers Association, in a phone interview. The NPDA called the protest.

Starting January 1, all trucks built before 1994 will be barred from the ports. Trucks built from 1994 to 2003 can only enter if they have been retrofitted to reduce emissions—which costs tens of thousands of dollars per truck.

The stated goal of the Clean Truck Program is to reduce diesel emissions at the ports. By 2012, all trucks that don’t meet 2007 emissions standards will be banned. Drivers are quick to point out that the program targets independent truckers, while allowing shipping companies, oil refineries, and rail yards to continue contaminating the air.

“We’re not against going green, but this is drastic. It’s so many trucks at once,” said Amaya. “We’re demanding an extension for all the trucks that are 2003 and under, and an investigation of what happened to the grants.”

He and other NPDA members say that the government has provided tens of millions of dollars to large trucking companies to buy new trucks, but that independent truckers haven’t gotten any of the grants. A new truck costs more than \$100,000.

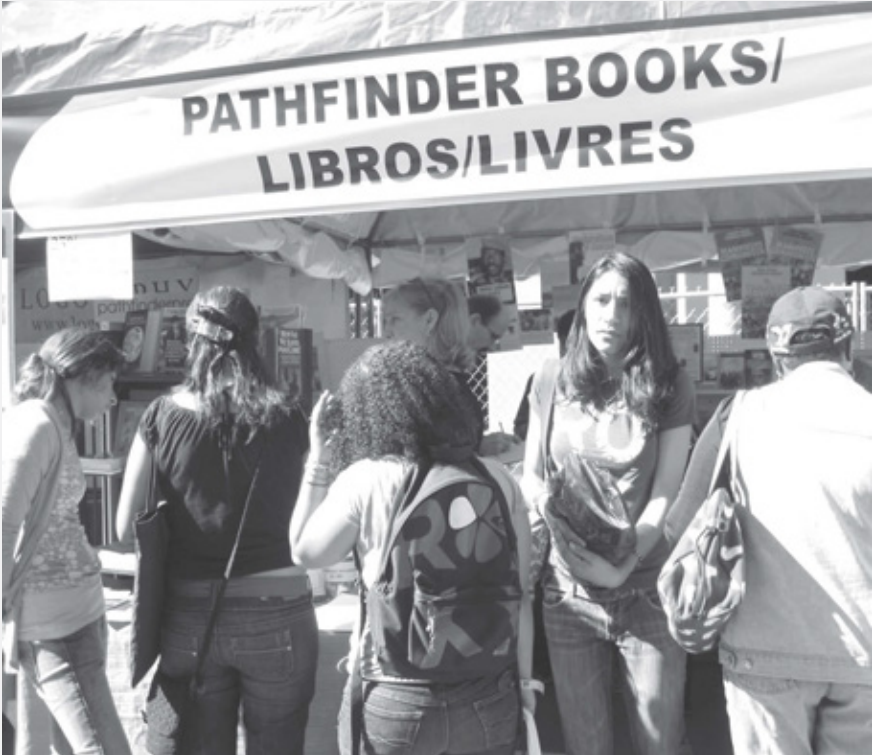
Sarah Hamilton, a spokeswoman for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who has been a big promoter of the Clean Truck Program, said independent drivers should join trucking companies that could cover such expenses.

At a truck stop near the port in Long Beach the day after the protest, many drivers told *Militant* correspondents that they have had to sell their trucks, or will do so, because they can’t meet the new requirements. One trucker pointed out that the slowdown in the economy is aiding the bosses in putting the burden of cleaning the air on the backs of workers.

Drivers are also affected by the fees the Port of Long Beach is charging for all containers hauled by pre-2007 trucks—\$35 for loaded 20-foot or smaller containers and \$70 for larger ones.

Bolorerdene Ganbat said he does not know what he’ll do after January 1. His 2001 truck will need a retrofit to enter the port. The Port of Long Beach did a lottery to pay to upgrade some trucks, and he won. But in exchange, he has to commit to hauling at least 150 containers per year from the port. “I checked with different companies, and they all said they couldn’t guarantee me work because it’s still an old truck,” and they would have to pay the fees, he said. “They want to

## Interest in socialist publications at Miami fair



Militant/Deborah Liatos

MIAMI—Hundreds of people stopped by the Pathfinder Press booth November 13–15 at Miami Book Fair International. Participants purchased 89 Pathfinder books. *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* was the best selling title with 15 copies, followed by the *Communist Manifesto* with 10 copies purchased in English, French, or Spanish editions. Four copies of *New International* magazine and three of *Nueva Internacional* were purchased. The latest issues of both feature an article on the roots of the capitalist financial crisis. Volunteers at the booth sold 38 subscriptions to the *Militant* and numerous copies of the supplement containing the introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, a Pathfinder title coming soon. Many picked up books and literature about the international campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for 11 years now, known as the Cuban Five.

—EMILY PAUL

only give the work to people with new trucks.”

Arturo Cadillo, who took part in the November 13 caravan, worked for many years as a port driver in Los

Angeles and now does long distance driving out of Texas. “We have to stop the abuse,” he said. “They target us because we don’t have representatives.”

## Lynne Stewart ordered to prison

**Continued from front page**  
at the request of one of her imprisoned clients, Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, who had been framed up on charges of “seditious conspiracy” based on alleged links to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

The appeals court judges ordered the judge in Stewart’s trial to reconsider her sentence, which they said was too short. The government had originally demanded a 30-year term.

Stewart is 70 years old.  
Stewart declared to the media, “You haven’t seen the last of me” and asked supporters to back “all the political prisoners, not just me.” She said she expected to “find a lot of friends” behind bars. In addition to defending clients accused in political cases, she is known for taking the cases of many workers who ran into trouble with the law and had no funds to pay a lawyer.

# THE MILITANT

## Defend affirmative action!

*Affirmative action programs were won by working people through social struggles. Mounting layoffs threaten to wipe out past gains as Blacks, Latinos, and women are ‘last hired, first fired.’ The ‘Militant’ covers the fight to defend them. Don’t miss a single issue!*



Militant/Susan Lamont

Students rally November 5 at University of Maryland for affirmative action programs.

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# Judge: Army engineers to blame for Katrina flood

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—More than four years after the levees broke in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, a federal judge has ruled in favor of residents who hold the government, not nature, responsible. More than 1,400 people died and thousands more were left homeless in this disaster.

U.S. District Judge Stanwood Duval handed down the decision November 18 that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers displayed “gross negligence” in failing to maintain a navigation channel, resulting in levee breaches and flooding of the city.

For more than 40 years, he said, the corps had known that a crucial levee protecting suburban St. Bernard Parish and the Lower 9th Ward neighborhood would be compromised by the deterioration of the Mississippi River—Gulf Outlet channel.

The judge awarded a total of \$719,000 to four individuals and one business that sued the government in April 2006. He rejected the cases of two plaintiffs from eastern New Orleans.

“The government has caused a lot of homelessness and death here. I welcome the judge’s decision because it has been as if you can’t sue them, that you can’t hold the government responsible,” Sam Jackson, a New Orleans public housing resident who has been fighting the escalating destruction of public housing since Katrina, told the *Militant*.

Another New Orleans resident, Mike Howells, added, “The flooding caused by government neglect went far beyond St. Bernard Parish and the Lower 9th. Hundreds of thousands of others have been denied the right of return and have even been kicked out of their homes.”

Katrina flood damage claims numbering 400,000 have been filed. A Circuit Court dismissed class action lawsuits filed in 2007 against insurance companies for flood damage.

The channel was completed in the 1960s as a highly profitable shipping shortcut between New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. Protective marsh totaling 27,000 acres that stood between St. Bernard Parish and Lake



Federal judge found U.S. Army Corps of Engineers displayed “gross negligence” in failing to maintain navigation channel that led to flooding after Hurricane Katrina. More than 1,400 people were killed. Above, devastated working-class neighborhood in New Orleans.

Borgne were wiped out in the process. Long before Katrina hit, there had been many warnings that the destruction of wetlands could create a funnel effect that would intensify storm surges, Duval said in his ruling.

The channel represents only one example of the indifference shown by governments at all levels to the lives of working people. In the five years leading up to Katrina, Louisiana received nearly \$2 billion for Army Corps of Engineers civil works projects, more than any other state.

By 1998 Louisiana’s state government dedicated less than one-tenth of 1 percent, or \$1.98 million, of its construction budget to New Orleans levee improvement. By contrast, \$22 million was spent that year to renovate a home for the Louisiana Supreme Court and other such projects.

Local government officials boasted about having the most ambitious flood-fighting plan, which included evacuation procedures for people with special needs. None of this proved to be true.

“Yes, the government is to blame. And it’s still going on today. They are tearing up the levees they have been working on and starting again because the rotten job they are doing has been found out,” Eloise Williams, from the Algiers section of New Orleans, told the *Militant*.

“The department is currently reviewing Judge Duval’s decision,” Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller told the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*. “We have made no decision as to what the government’s next step will be.”

## Students, workers protest at U. of California

Continued from front page

bers of Local 9119 have been without a contract for more than a year.

The actions come just four months after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bipartisan package imposing furloughs for state workers, closure of state parks, and massive cuts in health and welfare programs.

Pointing to a projected budget deficit of \$20 billion next year, capitalist politicians in the state government—Republican and Democrat—are preparing deeper cuts in 2010.

“This fee hike makes it an impossibility for many students to attend,” said Eduardo Alvarado, a pre-med student who joined the protest at UC Davis. “They are promising financial aid, but that’s not always possible to get, especially for students who are immigrants.”

At the University of California Los Angeles, more than 500 students rallied outside the UC Board of Regents meeting November 18 as the board approved the fee increases. Some stu-

dents went inside to raise their opposition. The cops declared the protest an “unlawful disruption” and barred the public from the regents’ meeting. Throughout the day, 14 demonstrators were arrested. Some students who tried to enter the building were hit with batons and Tasered by cops.

That night several dozen students barricaded themselves in Campbell Hall and occupied the building until the next evening. Others spent the night in tents on campus.

On November 19, reinforced by students from other UC campuses, the protest outside the regents’ meeting grew to some 2,000 students. “No justice! No peace!” they chanted, as inside the regents voted 20-1 to raise tuition to \$10,302 for next fall.

At UC Davis more than 50 students were arrested after they sat in at the administration building November 19. Around 7:00 p.m., two hours after the building usually closes, cops brought out handcuffed protesters, who were cheered by those supporting them outside. Earlier in the day several hundred students rallied and marched through the campus, chanting, “Join our strike.”

A rally of 2,000 students, faculty, campus workers, and others kicked off the protests on November 18 at UC Berkeley. Two days later, after the regents’ vote to raise fees, students occupied a classroom building, Wheeler Hall, where they protested the fee increases and demanded the rehiring of 38 laid-off custodians.

Police, some in riot gear, set up barricades and forced students away from the building. “They were beating people with batons, trampling over them,” said protester Caitlin McCoy, who was part of a large crowd of students gathered to support those who were sitting in. One student reported being hit by a rubber bullet.

The more than 12-hour occupation ended when those sitting in were arrested and charged with trespassing.

In the wake of a \$813 million cut in

state funding for the university, 2,000 workers were laid off in July, classes were cut, and furloughs instituted for faculty, workers, and staff.

More cuts are threatened. California Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor said the state will face a \$20.7 billion deficit next year, reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Taylor called on the governor to start work to fill that gap “as soon as possible.”

Democrat Karen Bass, speaker of the state assembly, is one of the regents who voted for the raise in tuition. She said the legislature will “immediately begin work on crafting budget solutions that will once again require both difficult spending reductions.”

Republican state senator Tom Harman said the state will have to make cuts, especially to social services, the *Chronicle* reported. “These are very difficult choices we get presented with, and we simply will have to do it,” he said.

Naomi Craine contributed to this article from Los Angeles.

### For further reading



#### Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

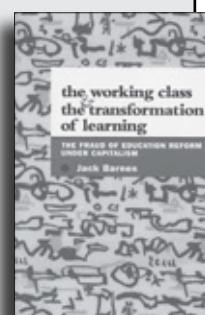
Waters explains why revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable, initiated not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the employing class’s crisis-driven assaults on our living standards and job conditions—on our very humanity. —\$7

#### The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes

Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. —\$3



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## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**Unemployment and the Capitalist Crisis: How the Working Class Can Fight for Jobs for All.** Speaker: Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**Washington’s Deepening War in Afghanistan: Why Working People Should Demand U.S. Out Now!** Speaker: Diana Newberry, SWP. Fri., Dec. 4, 8 p.m. 1311 1/2 E Lake St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**Capitalist Health Care “Overhaul”: An Attack on the Working Class.** Speaker: Mike Fitzsimmons, SWP. Fri., Dec. 4, 8 p.m. 45 Academy St., Suite 309. Tel.: (973) 273-0075.



# W. Sahara independence fighter on hunger strike

BY SETH GALINSKY

A prominent supporter of independence for the people of Western Sahara began a hunger strike November 16 against her expulsion from the country by Moroccan officials.

Aminatou Haidar was arrested November 13 at the Moroccan-controlled airport in El Aaiún, the capital of Western Sahara. She was returning from an awards ceremony in New York.

Haidar was held for 24 hours, her passport was confiscated, and she was finally forced onto a flight to Lanzarote, Canary Islands, a Spanish possession.

“They wanted to force me to recognize that Western Sahara belongs to Morocco,” she told the Spanish daily *El País*.

After arriving at the Canary Islands airport, Haidar tried to immediately return to Western Sahara, where she lives. At first she was told there were no available seats on the next flight. Then the police told her she could not leave Spain without a passport.

Inés Miranda, who is Haidar’s lawyer, pointed out the hypocrisy of the Spanish government, which refuses to grant asylum to many immigrants seeking to come to Spain, “while Haidar, who is not asking for it, is forced to stay here.”

Morocco’s regime has occupied Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony with large phosphate and iron ore deposits, since 1975. The pro-independence Polisario Front fought a war against the Moroccan regime from 1976 until 1991.

In 1991 both sides agreed to a UN-sponsored referendum on self-determination for the Sahrawi people, but the Moroccan government has consistently blocked a vote.

Since September the Moroccan government has stepped up actions against supporters of the Sahrawi struggle. In October seven Sahrawi independence supporters were arrested at the airport in Casablanca, Morocco. They were returning from a trip to western Algeria where they spent nine days at Sahrawi refugee



Aminatou Haidar (center) at airport in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, where she is on hunger strike to demand her right to return to Western Sahara, which has been occupied by Moroccan regime since 1975. Spanish government denied her right to board flight to her homeland.

camps in Tinduf that are run by the Polisario Front.

On November 6 King Mohammed VI gave a speech commemorating the 34th anniversary of the “Green March,” the Moroccan invasion of Western Sahara.

“Contact with the enemy is trea-

son,” he said, calling on the security forces to act more forcefully against “the adversaries of the territorial integrity of Morocco.”

In 1987 at the age of 20, Haidar was disappeared and tortured by the Moroccan secret police for more than three years. In 2005 she was jailed for seven months after being beaten by police during a demonstration protesting the occupation of Western Sahara.

This is the first time the Moroccan government has tried to force a Sahrawi activist into exile in Spain, *El País* said.

“I’ve seen many things in my life, but I never imagined that degree of complicity of the Spanish state with Morocco would go so far,” Haidar said. “I prefer a jail in the Sahara to being detained in Spain.”

On November 21 several hundred people joined a demonstration outside the airport in Lanzarote to support Haidar’s right to return.

## U.S. gov’t to triple immigration ‘audits’

**Continued from front page**

they did not have proper work permits.

ICE says it is focusing on companies that have a connection to “public safety and national security—for example, privately owned critical infrastructure and key resources.”

But the day of the announcement, immigration agents served subpoenas on at least four Vermont dairy farms, demanding access to their records. Some 2,000 Mexican immigrants work on dozens of dairy farms in the state.

The “Secure Communities” program, which checks the fingerprints of every prisoner in local jails against a Homeland Security database, is now being used in 95 cities and counties. In the first year of the program 111,000 people picked up by the cops on a variety of charges have been marked for deportation. Washington hopes to expand this to every jail in the United States by 2012.

The number of companies using the E-Verify program, which allows bosses to use an Internet system to verify the immigration status of new hires, has been growing by nearly 2,000 a week. More than 169,000 companies now use the system.

In a November 13 speech to the Center for American Progress, a liberal think-tank, Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano made clear what the Obama administration means by immigration “reform.”

The most important part of the reform, Napolitano said, is “serious and effective enforcement” of immigration laws. She called for increasing fines on companies that hire undocumented workers.

She called for a “tough pathway” to legalization for undocumented immigrants already in the United States. Among the hurdles she proposes imposing on these workers *before* they would be allowed to apply for legal status is to register, pay a fine, pay back taxes, pass a criminal background check, and learn English.

One ominous part of Napolitano’s speech was her accusation that “cor-

rupt” immigration attorneys knowingly help immigrants “fraudulently” seek asylum or permanent residence.

Some immigrant rights groups glossed over the anti-immigrant framework of the Obama administration’s reform proposals, calling Napolitano’s promise of passage of a reform bill in 2010 “welcome news.”

A statement on the Fair Immigration Reform Movement’s Web site, which says it includes 30 immigrant rights groups across the United States, said “no shock there” in reference to Napolitano’s vow to keep prioritizing

enforcement of anti-immigrant laws.

A week after the speech, Napolitano announced a new reward for companies that enroll in E-Verify, undergo an I-9 employment record audit, and sign a partnership agreement with ICE. Those companies will be allowed to advertise their products with a seal that says “I E-Verify” with a waving American flag.

The program was announced at a symposium that included representatives from Cargill Meat Solutions, Keystone Foods, Tyson Foods, Wal-Mart, Marriot International, Talent Tree, and General Dynamics.

## Five Black workers sentenced in Miami

**Continued from front page**

plus hotel lodging and expenses to entrap the group. The FBI operatives, Elie Assad and Abbas al-Saidi, posed as members of al-Qaeda and offered money to the seven if they would take a loyalty oath to al-Qaeda and join in a terrorist plot.

From the beginning the defendants explained that they had gone along with the FBI’s proposals in order to get the money offered them but that they never intended to take any action. The government had to admit that no weapons, plans for a terrorist

act, or literature were found.

Arrested in June 2006, the Liberty City Seven were brought to trial three times. The first ended in an acquittal for one of the defendants and a mistrial for six others. The second trial of the six resulted in another mistrial. Only in the third trial in May, after three years and three trials, was a guilty verdict brought in against five of the framed-up defendants, and this was only after a Black woman juror was removed in the middle of the trial. Another defendant was found innocent.

U.S. District Court Judge Joan Len-

ard, who sentenced the Liberty City defendants, is the same judge who presided over the frame-up trial on false charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage” of five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for more than 11 years. (See story on page 7.)

Many here believe that Judge Lenard gave the Liberty City defendants much lower sentences than the government prosecutors had demanded because of widespread knowledge of and opposition to the frame-up in the Miami area, especially in the Black community here.

## UK workers strike against drug store giant

BY PAUL DAVIES

SOUTH ELMSALL, England—“We’ve stayed solid for two weeks,” said Steve Benn on the picket line at the Superdrug distribution center here. “The company did not think we would have the bottle. They underestimated us and thought we would cave in.” Benn, a senior shop steward, is one of 261 members of the UNITE union who have been on strike since November 4 against cuts in shift allowance and other changes to working conditions.

“The company says it has to cut the shift allowance to save our jobs—that’s not true—it’s to save them money,”

Benn added. “Some workers would lose nearly £2,000 a year by elimination of the shift allowance (£1= US\$1.66). They also want to change our shifts so we have to come in any day, anytime.”

In solidarity, workers have supplied wood for the fire by the picket line. “The local butcher provides meat for the picket line barbecue,” noted Benn. “Others are watching this strike. If Superdrug wins, other companies will go after working conditions.”

Benn, who use to work at Frickley colliery, was one of three former miners on the picket line. “They have threatened to sack workers who don’t go

back,” he said. “I was out for 12 months in 1984–85 [during the nationwide miners’ strike], so I am used to this.” He described how 25 workers are dispatched from the picket line every day to leaflet Superdrug shops across the United Kingdom, talking to customers and shop workers, explaining why they are on strike.

“There are 30 workers from Poland at the plant,” Benn stated. “All are in the union and some have joined teams visiting the shops.”

Workers are now discussing a new offer from the company. The details were not made available.



# Obama's tour of Asia

Continued from front page

ous two U.S. administrations, any agreement by North Korea to return to talks will not be reciprocated with food aid, a senior administration official traveling with Obama told the *Washington Post*.

The country's food crisis is expected to worsen. Earlier this year Washington suspended 500,000 tons of food aid agreed to under the administration of George W. Bush. Similarly, South Korean president Lee Myung-bak ended a decade of large-scale food and fertilizer aid to the north after winning the presidency in 2007.

In a joint Japan-U.S. statement issued during the tour, Obama and Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama urged Pyongyang to return to the six party negotiations without preconditions.

Chinese president Hu Jintao took a more muted stance, voicing support for continued negotiations to further the "denuclearization process of the Korean Peninsula." How Beijing will respond to Washington's plan to starve Pyongyang into submission is still to be seen. But in August, the Chinese government took a step to make its trade with North Korea more difficult to ascertain. Beijing suddenly stopped publishing its trade figures with North Korea, which receives about a quarter million tons of food annually from China at preferential prices.

Only Tokyo expressed any, albeit mild, support for Washington's campaign to impose sanctions against Iran. "We have to support—we would like to support the approach to Iran. On the one hand, we want to emphasize our historic relationship, but also, at the same time, I promise to strengthen our alliance vis-a-vis Iran," said Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama.

The most striking feature of the Japanese leg of the tour however, was the newly elected Democratic Party of Japan government's more assertive tone and desire to establish what it calls a "more equal relationship" with Washington.

In a joint press conference November 13, Hatoyama referred to Japan's alliance with Washington as the "foundation" of its foreign policy. But two days later at a meeting in Singapore he emphasized his government's shift toward strengthening economic and diplomatic ties with countries in Asia.

The most contentious issue has been Hatoyama's position that more than 30,000 U.S. troops should leave the Japanese island of Okinawa, and possibly the whole country. In 2006 Tokyo and Washington signed an agreement to relocate U.S. forces from the Futenma Air Base, located in a densely populated urban area, to a new base that would be constructed by 2014 in a rural coastal area of the island.

Last month U.S. secretary of defense Robert Gates said Washington would refuse to alter the 2006 pact. If Tokyo backed out of its agreement to relocate U.S. troops in Okinawa to the coast, he said, then 8,000 troops slated for re-deployment in Guam would remain in Futenma and no land would be returned to Japan.

During the November 13 news conference, Obama and Hatoyama announced the setting up of a "working group" to

resolve the issue. Its purpose, according to Obama, will be to "focus on implementation of the agreement" the two sides signed in 2006. White House officials followed up to make clear this meant Washington was not open to re-negotiation.

Three days later Hatoyama told reporters in Tokyo that his government did not share that view. "If our review is merely aimed at making a decision confirming the agreement, its meaningless," he said.

Everywhere Obama went the trade tensions between Washington and countries in Asia was a major theme. Obama gave lip service to open markets, while urging Asian competitors to rely less on exporting to a U.S. market.

Obama pledged to "move forward" on a stalled free trade agreement struck with South Korea in 2007. South Korean president Lee has said Seoul would agree to rediscuss automobile trade if necessary, a major issue for Washington.



U.S. Army/Sgt. Kelly Lowery

U.S. president Obama, flanked by South Korean foreign minister Yu Myung-hwan, arrives at Osan Air Force Base in South Korea. He used visit to campaign against North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs but accomplished little concrete for U.S. rulers.

In recent months Washington has launched protectionist measures against Chinese products, including tariffs on Chinese tires and steel pipes and "anti-dumping" probes against Chinese coated paper and phosphate salts. Chi-

nese president Hu blasted U.S. "abusive protectionism," while ignoring Obama's calls for Beijing to allow its currency to appreciate. The current setup gives Chinese products a price advantage in U.S. markets.

## More than 100 killed in China mine blast

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A powerful gas explosion at a coal mine in northeastern China killed at least 104 workers in the early morning hours of November 21. Another four were unaccounted for a day-and-a-half later, still trapped underground in the mine shaft, reported the Xin-

hua news agency.

Sixty miners were hospitalized for injuries ranging from carbon monoxide poisoning to burns, according to Chinese Central TV. Authorities said this was the worst mine disaster in the country in nearly two years.

The blast occurred at the large state-owned Xinxing Coal Mine in the city of Hegang in Heilongjiang Province near the border with Russia.

"The mine has too many mining platforms in operation and has sent too many workers down the pit to increase output," Zhao Tiechui, deputy head of the government's work safety agency, said after the disaster. The Xinxing mine, which has been operating since 1917, produces 12 million tons of coal a year.

At the time of the explo-



Relatives of miners killed in Xinxing Coal Mine in Heilongjiang Province, China, November 23 demand answers from officials.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 7, 1984

WASHINGTON—Protests demanding an end to Washington's complicity with the racist South African government and an end to apartheid have continued here for a week. Actions have included sit-ins at the South African embassy—followed by arrests of protesters—and daily picket lines outside the embassy.

The immediate demand is the release of 13 South African labor leaders who have not been heard from since South African cops arrested them following the two-day strike in that country November 5–6.

The protests began on November 21, when Walter Fauntroy, Washington's nonvoting delegate to Congress; Mary Berry, a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission; and Randall Robinson, director of TransAfrica, the Black lobby for Africa and the Caribbean, were arrested by uniformed Secret Service agents for refusing to leave the South African embassy.



December 7, 1959

The recent conference held in Cleveland to organize an American Negro Labor Council was a historic step both for the Negro people and for organized labor. The response to the conference call and the plans laid by the delegates indicate that an important movement is in process of being born. It is a movement which will greatly advance the fight against Jim Crow and greatly strengthen the power of organized labor.

"More than 300 Negro labor leaders holding responsible administrative and management positions within the AFL-CIO and other independent unions" attended the conference, according to the Nov. 28 Michigan Chronicle.

Among those at the Cleveland conference were unionists from New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, St. Louis, Youngstown, Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Columbus, Marietta and St. Clairsville, Ohio.



December 8, 1934

The Commission on Unemployment of the Workers Party Convention, with Anthony Ramuglia, president of the National Unemployed League (NUL) presiding, took up a number of problems connected with the relation of the Workers Party to the NUL and the tactics to be used in building and extending the influence of the movement.

A decision was taken to recognize the National Unemployed League as the largest and most effective organization in that vast and relatively untapped field, and to place the Workers Party in full support of the NUL, working vigorously for its extension.

Workers Party tactics and principles in its unemployed work follow closely the tactics applied in the past by the American Workers Party and the Communist League of America and which have proved their correctness and effectiveness.

THE MILITANT

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# Capitalist crisis sharpens 20 years after Berlin Wall

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON— Leaders of the world's dominant capitalist nations participated in celebrations in Berlin to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989. Led by German chancellor Angela Merkel, they watched as a line of giant foam dominoes were toppled to symbolize the collapse of the Stalinist regimes across Eastern Europe two decades ago.

The *Financial Times* claimed that the world has become a “safer, freer, richer” place since the shattering of these regimes and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The London *Times* urged politicians participating in the celebrations to commit themselves to a “compassionate capitalism . . . compatible with European ideals.”

The wall fell in the face of growing popular mobilizations across the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), leading to the reunification of Germany in October 1990. The imperialist rulers thought the collapse of the Stalinist regimes would open prospects for them to regain what they had lost when workers and farmers took power in the 1917 Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution. Capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe were overturned following World War II.

Today however, Europe is marked by sharpening differences among rival capitalist nations and growing assaults on the toilers as the rulers seek to make working people pay for their crisis.

Following onerous conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund on Latvia, the government is cutting wages for public employees by up to 20 percent, pensions by 10 percent, and reducing working hours. The government has also sharply reduced subsidies for medical prescriptions.

## Declining profit rates

The underlying cause of the crisis is rooted in the decades-long decline in profit rates. In Germany, consumer prices fell 0.6 percent over the last year—the first annual decline in 22 years. Deflation is part of intensifying competition among capitalists, putting enormous downward pressures on their investment in manufacturing and production. To shore up profit rates, the bosses are trying to get more work out of fewer workers.

In the United Kingdom youth unemployment has risen to 18 percent, and half of all employers say they plan a wage freeze. Unemployment in

Spain stands at 18 percent, the highest in Europe.

Across Europe workers increasingly face a common future. In August thousands of car workers at the state-owned AvtoVAZ plant in Russia protested the reduction of working hours to 20 a week. General Motors is planning to cut 10,000 jobs at its car plants across Europe. Following the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in 1989 and the credit-led boom of the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of workers from Eastern Europe emigrated to find work, transforming and strengthening the working classes in the countries they moved to.

The current crisis is sharpening tensions among Europe's capitalist nations. Earlier this year José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, noted that different European countries had taken unilateral action to bail out their nation's banks. Politicians in each country have turned toward protectionist measures, and each government embarked on “national recovery paths without reference to European Union rules,” reported the *Daily Telegraph*.

## Germany reunification a burden

The reunification of Germany has turned out to be a huge burden for the German rulers. They have poured billions into eastern Germany for unemployment benefits and a range of social programs in hopes of postponing a showdown with workers and farmers. In 1990 German government debt stood at \$300 billion. The Finance Ministry in July estimated that it would reach \$2.8 trillion by 2013. To this day incomes in the former East Germany still only average 71 percent of what is earned in the west.

In reality, German reunification led to a relative weakening of German imperialism in relation to its rivals. An article in the November 15 issue of the *Economist* noted, “Germany's relative importance has diminished. Today it is a medium-sized power whose influence looms large within Europe but is spotty beyond it.”

The collapse of the Stalinist regimes across Europe was not followed by greater stability, but by the first war in continental Europe in 50 years, in Yugoslavia. The war was a product of sharpening interimperialist rivalry, and conflict among the would-be capitalist politicians in the deformed workers state.

For decades, the Stalinist leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party blocked efforts to build on gains of the 1949 revolution and unite toilers of different national origins. The imperialist



People atop Berlin Wall Nov. 9, 1989. Wall came down in face of popular protests in East Germany. Reunification in October 1990 led to weakening of German imperialism.

rulers saw the war as an opportunity to advance efforts to overturn the conquests of the Yugoslav revolution, and restore capitalist property relations, on the backs of a bloody assault on the peoples of Yugoslavia.

The 20 years since the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe have demonstrated that contrary to the hopes of the imperialist powers, the working classes in these countries have not been defeated by the collapsing bureaucratic castes. The rulers cannot accomplish this simply by pouring in money. With the collapse of these regimes, the world's imperialist rulers lost a valuable transmission belt for bourgeois values among privileged lay-

ers of the toilers and now have to take on workers in these countries directly.

It took revolutionary struggles by the toilers to overturn capitalism and it will take counterrevolutionary force for the capitalist class to reimpose their exploitation on workers and farmers.

What disintegrated in 1989 were the Stalinist parties across Eastern Europe. With the weakening of this obstacle went their counterfeit of communism. As today's social and economic crisis deepens, prospects have increased that new generations of fighters will find their way to the example and lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the 1959 conquest of power by the workers and farmers of Cuba.

# CPUSA leader falsifies Marx to promote pro-Obama views

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A column in the November 7–13 *People's Weekly World*, a newspaper reflecting the views of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), highlights the group's further evolution away from any pretense of building a revolutionary workers party and toward being a radical political association entrenched in U.S. bourgeois politics instead.

Titled “A ragged process,” the column is by Sam Webb, the CPUSA chairman. He writes, “The notion of the capitalist class on the one side and the working class on the other may sound ‘radical,’ but it is neither Marxist, nor found in life and politics.”

Webb hails the election of Barack Obama to the U.S. presidency as “the defeat of right-wing extremism” that has been in power for the past 30 years—a period that would include, by the way, the eight years of the Democratic administration of William Clinton. Webb attributes this defeat of right-wing extremism not just to the “brilliance” of Obama but also to “the broad wings of a people's coalition.”

This “coalition,” Webb writes, “stretches (for now) from President Obama to the core forces of the people's movement: labor, African American, Latino, and other racially oppressed people, women, and youth.” It also includes “dissatisfied grassroots supporters of the right wing, sections of the Democratic Party and even cor-

porate capital—depending on the issue at hand.” He gives no examples of what those issues might be.

The CPUSA's perspective over the next few years, Webb says, is to seek a “new New Deal.” The original New Deal was a package of reforms implemented by the Franklin Roosevelt administration in the midst of the 1930s depression to rescue capitalism from collapse and thwart rising labor militancy from organizing independent working-class political action.

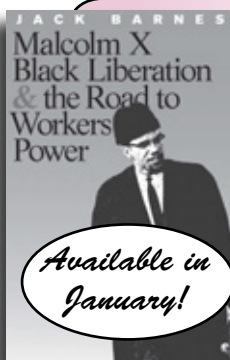
“The main elements of the New Deal . . . were won not in 1933, which was Roosevelt's first year in office, but in 1935–1937,” Webb states. “I suspect the future will be much the same.”

In the same issue of *PWW* Paquet Daniel writes a letter to the editor about a discussion with a coworker who said he knew there were communists in the United States because he had seen the *Militant*. Daniel introduced the worker to the *PWW*. He says the worker liked the paper because it had a “fair approach of the reality, especially about Afghanistan.”

The front-page of that *PWW* carried the headline “‘No escalation’ is first step to peace in Afghanistan.” By contrast the *Militant* has consistently campaigned for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist forces from Afghanistan and Iraq.

The *PWW* has announced that it will cease publication of a printed edition beginning January 1.

## For further reading



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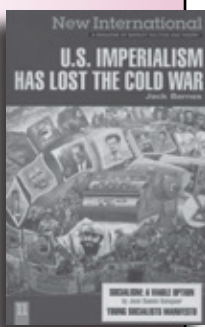
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# Cuba: Conference advances fight to free Cuban Five

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
AND JACOB PERASSO

HOLGUÍN, Cuba—The U.S. government's request to a federal judge that Antonio Guerrero's prison sentence be reduced to 20 years, said Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, registered the accomplishments of the international campaign to win the release of Guerrero and four other Cubans unjustly imprisoned in the United States for their actions to defend the Cuban Revolution. Alarcón was speaking at an international conference here November 21.

The Cuban leader was referring to the resentencing hearing for Guerrero held in Miami October 13. When the judge asked the government attorney to explain why the U.S. Justice Department was now proposing to reduce the sentence, Alarcón said, the attorney replied they wanted to quell the "noise" around the case. That was an acknowledgment, he said, that the U.S. government is feeling heat from the worldwide campaign demanding freedom for the Cuban Five, as they are widely known.

Alarcón was speaking at the Fifth International Colloquium for the Release of the Cuban Five and Against Terrorism, sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), held here November 19–22. Nearly 200 people from 45 countries gathered to discuss how to broaden the fight, the largest of these annual gatherings to date.

## Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. As the proletarian-based

struggle for Black rights was advancing in the U.S., the social transformation fought for and won by Cuban toilers set an example that socialist revolution is not only necessary—it can be made and defended. —\$10

## The Inevitable Battle

by Juan Carlos Rodríguez

The U.S.-led invasion of Cuba in April 1961 was defeated in 66 hours by militia battalions composed of worker and peasant volunteers, along with soldiers from the Cuban armed forces.

The failure of the attack was not due to poor strategy and tactics on the part of the invading forces. But the human material available to Washington could not match the courage and determination of a people fighting to defend what they had gained through the continent's first socialist revolution. —\$20

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Militant/Martín Koppel

Speakers at November 20 session of Cuban Five conference in Holguín, Cuba. From left: Irma Sehwerert, mother of René González; Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández; Basilio Gutiérrez, vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; Mirtha Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero; Olga Salanueva, wife of René González; Ivette González, daughter of René González; and Lourdes González, sister of Fernando González.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González have been locked up for more than 11 years on false charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and other counts. They had been monitoring counterrevolutionary Cuban groups in Florida that have carried out deadly attacks against the people of Cuba.

Participants in the Holguín conference came from countries throughout Latin America, North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. These included Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, Spain, Germany, South Korea, Vietnam, and Kenya. The country with the largest attendance was the United States, with more than 20 participants. Many countries were represented largely by long-time members of Cuba and Cuban Five solidarity committees.

### Youth participation

The conference was marked by the participation of young people not previously involved in activity in defense of the Cuban Revolution or to free the Cuban Five. Among them were youth from several countries—from Equatorial Guinea to the United States—who are studying in Cuba. U.S. participants included five students from the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana, as well as a half dozen recent college graduates who are interns at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C. Also present, on their first visit to Cuba, were some 20 youth from Moscow who are part of a Russian musical group, Grenada, which performed at the conference (see [www.grenada.al.ru](http://www.grenada.al.ru)).

Many participants, especially young people, were drawn to literature tables at the conference. They picked up books, buttons, posters, and other material from the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. They also bought some 70 books and pamphlets on revolutionary working-class politics and dozens of copies of the *Militant* from members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in the United States participating in the event.

The conference opened with an exhibit of paintings by Cuban children dedicated to the five imprisoned men. Over two days, participants held plenary sessions and workshops to share

experiences and discuss how to advance the defense campaign. Conference delegates also joined some 3,000 Holguín residents for a rally calling on the U.S. government to release "our five heroes," as they are popularly known here. Among the speakers were Alarcón; Ailí Labañino, daughter of Ramón; and Alicia Jrapko from the U.S. office of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. Jrapko spoke on the importance of the support for the campaign already won in the United States.

### Discussions with Holguín residents

On the final day delegates divided up into groups that traveled to towns across Holguín Province to exchange experiences with local residents on the fight to release the Cuban Five and learn more about working people's 50-year history of resistance here to Washington's war against the Cuban Revolution. In the coastal village of Boca de Samá, participants learned about an armed attack in 1971 by CIA-organized counterrevolutionaries in which two people were killed and others severely injured.

Further exchanges took place that evening in the working-class district of Alcides Pino in the city of Holguín, hosted by the local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. Residents told of the enormous progress, thanks to their collective efforts, in rebuilding homes and other facilities since last

year's devastating Hurricane Ike.

The plenary sessions featured remarks by several relatives of the imprisoned Cubans who have been at the forefront of the campaign for their release. They included Irma Sehwerert, mother of René González; Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández; Mirtha Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero; and Olga Salanueva, wife of René González.

### December 8 resentencing hearings

A focal point of the conference was the recent federal court hearing in Miami at which Guerrero's sentence was reduced. Last year a federal appeals court in Atlanta threw out the life sentences given Guerrero and Labañino, as well as Fernando González's 19-year prison term, ruling that the sentences exceeded federal guidelines for the crimes the three had been convicted of. At the hearing for Guerrero, the U.S. government asked that his sentence be reduced to 20 years. The judge rejected that recommendation and gave Guerrero 21 years and 10 months. Resentencing hearings for the other two men are scheduled for December 8.

During one session a delegate from the Basque region in France asked why Guerrero's attorneys had struck a deal with federal prosecutors on a 20-year sentence. Adriana Pérez and Mirtha Rodríguez each explained that the only agreement was to recommend to the judge something less than federal sentencing guidelines called for, and that there was no admission of guilt and no contrition on Guerrero's part. Rodríguez noted that the Atlanta court order opened a breach through which the campaign to free the five can be further advanced. In his remarks at the conference, Alarcón said there was no justice in the reduced sentence given to Guerrero but the government's request registered a new stage in the international campaign to free the five.

The closing session, chaired by ICAP president Kenia Serrano, adopted a final declaration and plan of action. It called for intensifying and expanding the campaign on all fronts, and noted several important upcoming dates including December 8, to demand immediate release of the Cuban Five and the granting of U.S. visas to Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva, who have repeatedly been denied the right to visit their husbands.



Militant/Martín Koppel

November 21 rally in Holguín, Cuba, to demand release of Cuban Five.



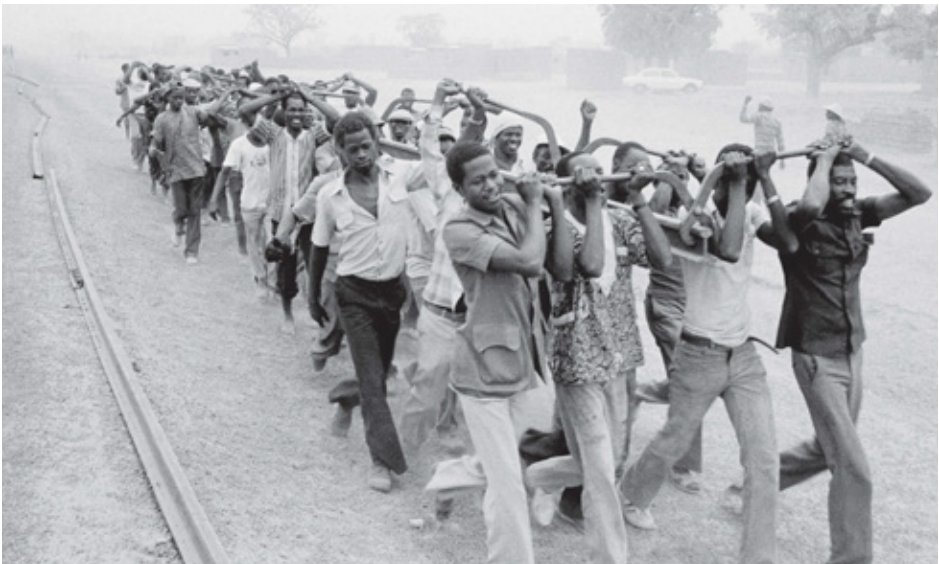
# Sankara: For a united front against the debt

Printed below is an excerpt from Thomas Sankara Speaks. The French edition is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Sankara was the leader of a deep-going popular revolution in the West African nation Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. In speeches and interviews he charts a course that placed the political mobilization and organization of workers and peasants as a prerequisite to effectively combat the hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness imposed on Africa by centuries of colonial and capitalist rule. The piece below is from a speech presented at an Organization of African Unity conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 29, 1987. Sankara calls for a united front against paying the massive debts owed to the giant banks in the imperialist centers. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

The debt in its present form is a cleverly organized reconquest of Africa under which our growth and development are regulated by stages and norms totally alien to us. It is a reconquest that turns each of us into a financial slave—or just plain slave—of those who had the opportunity, the craftiness, the deceitful-



John Vink/Magnum Photos

**Volunteer government workers lay track as part of “Battle for the Railroad” campaign, initiated by the popular revolutionary government in Burkina Faso in early 1985. “It was the colonizers who put Africa into debt to the financiers,” said Sankara. “That’s why we cannot pay it.”**

ness to invest funds in our countries that we are obliged to repay. Some tell us to pay the debt. This is not a moral question. Paying or not paying is not a question of so-called honor at all.

Mr. President:  
We listened to and applauded the prime minister of Norway when she spoke right here. She said, and she’s a European, that the debt as a whole cannot be repaid. I just want to develop her remarks further by saying that none of the debt can be repaid. The debt cannot be repaid, first of all, because, if we don’t pay, the lenders won’t die. Of that you can be sure. On the other hand, if we do pay, we are the ones who will die. Of that you can be equally sure. Those who led us into debt were gambling, as if they were in a casino. As long as they were winning, there was no problem. Now that they’re losing their bets, they demand repayment. There is talk of a crisis. No, Mr. President. They gambled. They lost. Those are the rules of the game. Life goes on. [Applause]

We cannot repay the debt because we have nothing to pay it with. We cannot repay the debt because it’s not our responsibility. We cannot repay the debt because, on the contrary, the others owe us something that the greatest riches can never repay—a debt of blood. It is our blood that was shed.

People talk of the Marshall Plan,

which rebuilt the economy of Europe.<sup>1</sup> But they don’t mention the African Plan, which enabled Europe to face Hitler’s hordes at a time when their economies were under siege, their stability threatened. Who saved Europe? It was Africa. There is very little talk about that. There is so little talk that we can’t become accomplices ourselves of this ungrateful silence. If others can’t sing our praise, we have the duty, at the very least, to point out that our fathers were courageous and that our veteran fighters saved Europe and ultimately allowed the world to rid itself of Nazism.

The debt is also the product of confrontations. When people talk to us today about economic crisis, they forget to mention that the crisis didn’t appear overnight. It has been with us for a long time, and it will deepen more and more as the popular masses become increasingly aware of their rights in face of the exploiters. There is a crisis today because the masses refuse to allow wealth to be concentrated in the hands of a few individuals.

There is a crisis because a few individuals hold colossal sums of money in

1. Launched by Washington in April 1948 as an early move in the emerging Cold War, the Marshall Plan financed reconstruction and rearmament of capitalist Europe, much of which was destroyed during the Second World War.

foreign banks—enough to develop Africa. There is a crisis because in face of these individual fortunes, whose owners we can name, the popular masses refuse to live in ghettos and slums. There is a crisis because people everywhere refuse to stay in Soweto when Johannesburg is directly opposite them. That is, there is struggle, and the deepening of this struggle leads to worries among the holders of financial power.

They ask us today to collaborate in the search for stability. Stability to the benefit of the holders of financial power. Stability to the detriment of the popular masses. No, we can’t be accomplices in this. No, we can’t go along with those who suck the blood of our peoples and who live off the sweat of our peoples. We can’t go along with their murderous ventures.

Mr. President:  
We hear talk of clubs—the Club of Rome, the Club of Paris, the Club of Everywhere. We hear talk of the Group of Five, of Seven, of the Group of Ten, perhaps the Group of One Hundred. Who knows what else? It’s normal that we too have our own club, our own group. Starting today, let’s make Addis Ababa a similar seat, the center from which will come a breath of fresh air, the Club of Addis Ababa. We have the duty to create the united front of Addis Ababa against the debt. This is the only way we can say today that, by refusing to pay, we’re not setting out on a course of war but, on the contrary, a fraternal course of explaining the facts as they are.

What’s more, the popular masses of Europe are not opposed to the popular masses of Africa. Those who want to exploit Africa are the same ones as those who exploit Europe. We have a common enemy. Our Club of Addis Ababa must tell both sides that the debt cannot be paid. When we say the debt cannot be paid we are in no way against morality, dignity, or respect for one’s word. It’s our view that we don’t have the same morals as the other side. The rich and the poor don’t share the same morals. The Bible and the Koran can’t serve in the same way those who exploit the people and those who are exploited. There will have to be two editions of the Bible and two editions of the Koran. [Applause]

November

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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# Education and the working class

Thousands of students and workers across the University of California system are protesting the imposition of a 32 percent tuition hike and the refusal of the university to negotiate a contract with the campus workers’ union. They deserve the support of all working people.

In the current capitalist economic crisis many of the attacks on the living standard of working people are being carried out by state and city governments. Four months ago California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a “budget balancing” package that included unpaid furloughs for state workers, closing of parks, and massive cuts in health and welfare programs.

Capitalist politicians in the state—Democrats and Republicans—are preparing a new round of cuts, which they justify on the basis of a budget deficit. From the Schwarzenegger administration in California to that of Gov. David Paterson in New York this is a fake and a fraud to protect the wealthy holders of the states’ bonds. The government in California paid out \$41 million in cash in July to its bondholders, who by law are the first creditors to be paid. In June the California treasurer promised that short of “thermonuclear war” the bondholders would be paid in full.

The sweeping tuition hike at the University of California system highlights the fact that the capitalist rulers don’t think that workers need, much less have a right to, education. The broader access to a col-

lege education by the working class was a concession wrenched from the rulers by mass social struggles—most recently as part of the fight for Black civil rights in the 1960s and ’70s.

Under capitalism there can be no meaningful education. As Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes explains in the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*, “The purpose of education is to give ‘the educated’ a stake in thinking they are going to be different—slightly better off, slightly more white collar—than other people who work all their lives. In the process, the rulers hope to make those who manage to get a college degree more dependable supporters of the status quo.”

The opposite is the case for workers. “They need us to be obedient, not to be educated,” Barnes says.

As the U.S. capitalist rulers face the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, they aim to resolve it on the backs of working people around the world. They must roll back the social wage won by our class, from schools to Social Security to Medicare and Medicaid and to health care more broadly. This is the logic of the rule of the billionaire families, the dictatorship of capital. We must answer their dictatorship by taking political power out of their hands and establishing the dictatorship of the working majority where education is a universal right, a human activity from cradle to grave.

## A welcome to ‘Militant’ readers

### Continued from front page

quences of the dictatorship of capital, which has led to the opening phase of the deepest economic and social crisis working people have faced in their lifetimes.

Worker correspondents for the *Militant* in cities around the world are active participants not only in the struggles they report on; they are also involved with fellow workers in forging a program and a revolutionary party that can lead working people in taking political power out of the hands of the ruling minority of billionaire capitalist families.

This week’s issue features articles on protests by students in California against tuition hikes; the escalating attack on immigrant workers by President Barack Obama’s administration; the sentencing of five African American workers in Liberty City—a largely African American section of Miami; protests by independent truckers in Los Angeles against “environmental” regulations that hamper their ability to earn a

living; and on a conference in Holguín, Cuba, to map continued plans in the fight to win the freedom of five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for 11 years on frame-up conspiracy charges.

Over the coming months the *Militant* will continue to campaign for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all the imperialist military forces in Afghanistan and Iraq; it will champion the fight of immigrant workers and the right of women to abortion; and will speak out against killer cops. We are confident that over that time you will come to see the *Militant* as an indispensable tool and become a long-term subscriber.

We encourage all of our readers to send in correspondence on strikes, protests, and other fights taking place at your job, in your city, or on your campus.

Supporters of the *Militant* will continue to get this working-class perspective into the hands of those who need it. To help in this ongoing effort contact a distributor listed on page 8.

## — LETTERS —

### Fort Hood I

The *Militant* says, “The killing of 13 soldiers and wounding of 30 others at Fort Hood November 5 revealed the degree to which the administration’s policy of ‘diversity’ in the military led it to ignore the obvious signals from Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan . . . that he was planning an Islamist-style terrorist attack. Obama’s first comment after the slaughter of defenseless workers in uniform was that no one should ‘jump to conclusions.’” [See “Openings today to build the communist movement” in the November 23 *Militant*, which reported on the November 7 public meeting in New York City sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists].

What is meant by Obama’s “policy of ‘diversity’”? Also, is it negative that Obama attempted to steer public opinion away from anti-Muslim conclusions, or away from the argument of Bill O’Reilly

and others that “this was a terrorist act”?

Thomas Smith  
Raleigh, North Carolina

### Fort Hood II

Is there a different policy of the Obama administration from what has been developing in the military since Truman’s desegregation of it?

The “War on Terror” has inspired vigilante attacks against Arabs and Muslims. I understand Obama’s comments on “not jump-

ing to conclusions” in this context, and I don’t understand why this should be a focus of criticism.

David Wilder  
Cleveland, Ohio

### Fort Hood III

On the incident at Fort Hood, I do not doubt the suspect planned a terrorist attack. However, is it accurate to refer to such attacks as “Islamist-style”? Does “Islamist” not imply that Islam advocates such actions? Would it not be more accurate to characterize the attacks as “jihadist”?

Bob Cantrick  
Toronto, Ontario

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

# Fort Hood and army ‘diversity’

### BY CINDY JAQUITH

The *Militant* has received several letters regarding the article “Openings today to build the communist movement” in the November 23 issue. The article reported on the November 7 public meeting in New York City sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists.

This column will take up questions about the Fort Hood shooting and the government’s “diversity” policy in the armed forces. Our starting point is complete opposition to Washington’s wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and anywhere else in the world.

Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, a U.S. Army psychiatrist who is Muslim and of Palestinian descent, has been charged in the killing of 13 soldiers at Fort Hood November 5. Eyewitnesses report that as he stood up to fire on unarmed troops in a processing center he yelled out, “Allahu Akbar!” (God is great!)

In June 2007 during a classroom presentation he said the “Department of Defense should allow Muslim soldiers the option of being released as ‘conscientious objectors’ to increase troop morale and decrease adverse events,” according to the *Washington Post*.

Hasan believed the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan was a war against Islam and opposed it. Scheduled to be deployed soon to Iraq or Afghanistan, he told family members he did not want to go. He had tried to get discharged for several years but his superior officers would not release him.

Accounts from patients that he proselytized them, and other complaints from colleagues, led the army to review his fitness to serve, but it found no reason to dismiss him.

At the November 7 public meeting SWP national secretary Jack Barnes explained that the U.S. rulers are going out of their way to promote Blacks, Latinos, and increasingly Arabic-speaking soldiers as officers. They pursue “diversity” not out of concern about discrimination, but rather to have an officer corps whose racial and national composition more closely resembles the ranks they will command. The capitalists view this as crucial to lead the imperialist fighting force they are putting together for their next decades of war.

So concerned are they to keep Arabic-speaking soldiers in the armed forces that even at the funeral for the 13 Fort Hood soldiers, Obama continued to call the shooting “incomprehensible.” But everyone attending the ceremony knew full well that the shooting was a *political* act, whatever Hasan’s mental state may have been.

It is true that rightist forces will seize on this incident to whip up anti-Muslim and anti-Arabic prejudice, as well as opposition to affirmative action. They and the military brass can be counted on to try to use the shooting to clamp down on soldiers’ right to express political views. But that doesn’t mean communists should portray the killing of the soldiers as having any progressive character whatsoever. The Fort Hood shooting *was* a terrorist attack.

One formulation in the article that was in error, however, is the description of the troops as “workers in uniform.” While workers may join the U.S. military, it does not change its imperialist character or in whose interest they fight—the wealthy property owners.

The *Militant* used the term “Islamist-style”—as distinct from “Islamic”—to describe the Fort Hood shooting because “Islamist” describes a political perspective, a belief that society should be ruled by a Muslim theocracy or caliphate. This is the reactionary outlook of al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and most rightist groups using Islam to justify a political course. The vast majority of Muslims, in fact, reject the Islamists’ actions.

Obama’s comment that no one should “jump to conclusions” about the motive for the Fort Hood attack was not an attempt to deflect anti-Muslim attacks. It was to deflect attacks on the government’s phony “diversity” program, which is a cover for what it’s *not* doing: carrying out genuine affirmative action that uproots the discrimination against the great mass of workers who are Black or of other oppressed nationalities. They are *not* sharing in “diversity.” They remain the first fired, and the last hired.